

GENERAL INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

The City of Fort Lauderdale is situated on the southeast coast of Florida, centrally located between Miami and Palm Beach. Encompassing more than 35.5 square miles with a population of more than 167,000, Fort Lauderdale is the largest of Broward County's 30 municipalities. Embraced by the Atlantic Ocean, New River and a myriad of scenic inland waterways, Fort Lauderdale truly lives up to its designation as the *Venice of America*.

An advantageous economic climate coupled with an exceptional quality of life is helping the City of Fort Lauderdale establish itself as a world class center for international commerce and one of the most desirable locations for new, expanding or relocating businesses. Once known strictly as a tourism-based economy, Fort Lauderdale now supports a diverse range of industries including marine, manufacturing, finance, insurance, real estate, high technology, avionics/aerospace, film and television production.

While tourism remains the area's leading economic engine, the marine industry now accounts for more than 88,000 jobs and close to \$5 billion in total economic impact. Fort Lauderdale has emerged as one of the fastest growing markets for global trade, with more than 40% of local businesses engaged in or supporting international commerce. In addition, the City remains at the forefront of South Florida's *InternetCoast* (a region that is home to nearly 6,000 high technology firms) by continuing to attract businesses in key high technology sectors, including software, web design, communications and electronic publishing.

Fort Lauderdale's growing list of nationally recognized corporations that have established business operations, corporate or Latin American headquarters in the City includes: AOL Latin America, AT&T, AutoNation, BankAtlantic, Citicorp, Citrix Systems, Galaxy Latin America, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft Latin America, Motorola Latin America, Republic Industries, South African Airways, Spherion Corporation, SportsLine.com and Voicestream Wireless.

Expanding global business opportunities, access to U.S. and international markets, a pro business government, low labor rates, a well-educated and diverse work force, exceptional values in housing, and an array of business assistance and incentive programs, make Fort Lauderdale an unbeatable location where both large and small businesses can prosper.

Fort Lauderdale also offers an outstanding quality of life, highlighted by a semi-tropical climate, rich natural beauty and array of cultural, entertainment and educational amenities. World famous Fort Lauderdale Beach offers premier opportunities for recreation, relaxation and enjoyment. The picturesque Riverwalk serves as the cornerstone of the City's arts, science, cultural and historic district which features the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Museum of Discovery and Science, Museum of Art and Old Fort Lauderdale Village and Museum. Las Olas Boulevard has gained international acclaim as Fort Lauderdale's centerpiece of fashion, fine dining and entertainment. In addition, the City's downtown area is home to Broward Community College, Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, the award-winning Broward County Main Library, federal, county and school district offices.

Through the cooperative efforts of residents, businesses and local government, Fort Lauderdale has evolved into a City that offers the best of both worlds – an attractive business environment and an outstanding quality of life. Fort Lauderdale looks forward to continuing to build upon its success to meet the challenges of the 21st Century and beyond.